

# Van Johnson's career tumbles to fifth billing

Van Johnson was the fair-haired boy of MGM when he was making movies with June Allyson in the late '40s and early '50s.

Today he's billed fifth to Fred Williamson, Bo Svenson, Henry Silva and Chuck Connors in a film called "Critical Action," written, produced and directed by Williamson, who patched together so many one-man shoestring jobs a decade ago they stopped getting distributed.

This one is to come out through 21st Century Film Corp., which snapped up the name before 20th Century Fox got to it.

21st Century also is to release "Terror of Manhattan," another attempt by Robert Englund to be successful outside the "Nightmare on Elm Street" series.

His schlocky "Phantom of the Opera" flopped last fall.

And William Shatner, who had a spot of bad response to his direction of "Star Trek V," is directing and starring in 21st Century's "Kingdom of the Spiders II." No snickering.

It's a big comedown in budget, no doubt, but the 1977 original, in which he starred, was as creepy as anything in the past 20 years.

— Ed Blank

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